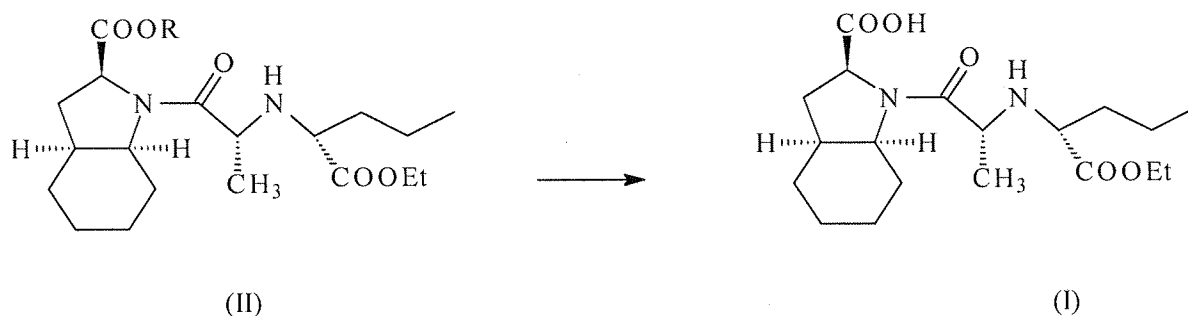


IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 17-20, 22, 23, 25 and 27-30 as follows:

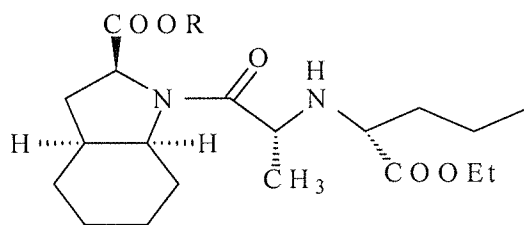
1. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril of formula (I) from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of a base which forms a pharmaceutically acceptable salt with said free acid formed by said deprotection.

2. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein R represents optionally substituted aralkyl.
3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.
4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents 4-halo substituted, or 4-C₁₋₄alkoxy substituted benzyl.

5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 4, wherein R represents 4-Cl benzyl, or 4-methoxy benzyl.
6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein said deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of a noble metal catalyst.
7. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein the noble metal catalyst comprises palladium-on-charcoal.
8. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein said base comprises t-butylamine.
9. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing perindopril t-butylamine from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



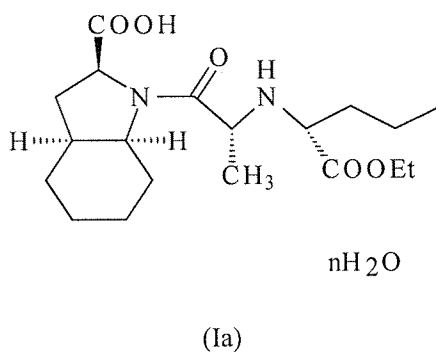
(II)

wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of t-butylamine so as to form the t-butylamine salt of perindopril.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of palladium-on-charcoal.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, which further comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril obtained by said process so as to yield a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of hydrated perindopril of formula (Ia)



wherein n is an integer of 1 to 5, or a reciprocal of integers 2 to 5.

13. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 12, wherein n is 1.

14. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a monohydrate of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril, which process comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril so as to yield said monohydrate.

15. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 12, wherein perindopril t-butylamine is hydrated to yield perindopril-t-butylamine monohydrate.

16-30. (Cancelled)